



Cape Charles / Northampton County, Virginia

BROWNFIELDS are abandoned, idled, or underused industrial and commercial properties where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived contamination. In May 1997, Vice President Gore announced a Brownfields National Partnership to bring together the resources of more than 15 federal agencies to address local cleanup and reuse issues in a more coordinated manner. This multi-agency partnership has pledged support to 16 "Brownfields Showcase Communities"—models demonstrating the benefits of collaborative activity on brownfields. The designated Brownfields Showcase Communities are distributed across the country and vary by size, resources, and community type. A wide range of support will be leveraged, depending on the particular needs of each Showcase Community.

PURPOSE

The Cape Charles/Northampton County, Virginia Pilot is working with multiple partners to revitalize the area's brownfields. Collectively, the Pilot has established more than 90 partnerships with local, state, and federal agencies, as well as private organizations and has leveraged more than \$8 million in cleanup and redevelopment funding.

BACKGROUND

The Brownfields National Partnership selected the Town of Cape Charles and Northampton County, Virginia as a Brownfields Showcase Community in 2000. In 1993, the Northampton County Board of Supervisors appointed a Sustainable Development Task Force to manage the Sustainable Development Initiative in Cape Charles. The award of the EPA Brownfields Showcase Community designation assisted in the development and implementation of the Initiative. By preserving greenspace, building eco-efficient infrastructure, and providing updated commercial and office space, the Cape Charles/Northampton County project is working to stimulate economic and environmental renewal in one of the nation's most impoverished areas. The poorest county within the Commonwealth of Virginia, 20 percent of its 13,000 residents live in poverty. Along with multiple economic incentives from the area, the county was named as an Enterprise Community by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The Pilot's activities focus on four key projects throughout the county: the Sustainable Technology Industrial Park (STIP) and Cape Charles harbor area, the Seaside Park near Oyster, the Center Chevrolet property in Exmore, and the Webster Canning or KMC Plant in Cheriton. Each property has a unique redevelopment plan aimed toward

meeting the needs of the community. Redevelopment plans include: an innovative eco-park and sustainable technology facility; a regional-scale coastal park with recreational amenities; a community Boys and Girls Club and town park; and a potential renewable energy project.

CURRENT ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

The Cape Charles/Northampton County Showcase Pilot has achieved multiple redevelopment successes throughout Northampton County. The Sustainable Technology Park at Cape Charles was targeted by the EPA Showcase Community Pilot for assessment and cleanup and is designed as a world class research/development and manufacturing center, encouraging green businesses, products, and processes. The environmental assessment involved evaluation of an abandoned 25-acre town dump and harbor front, with minimal cleanup completed. Building One, featuring many advanced design features, is open for business with 31,000 square feet of commercial, manufacturing, office and meeting space. The STIP property is one of four national eco-industrial park demonstration projects and features pollution-prevention efforts.

Just north of Oyster Harbor and the town of Oyster, the county resolved to reuse the former Northampton County landfill into a safe and popular public amenity and coastal park with passive and active recreation. The new Seaside Park will provide relief for a shortage of recreational facilities in the area, including soccer and recreational fields, a golf course, a skateboard park, a pool, and trails and boardwalks. The county successfully leveraged the necessary funding for initial construction. The environmental assessment findings indicate that much of the property is ready for reuse. Phase II environmental

sampling was completed, with the Phase II study to determine whether any cleanup is needed or whether the county master plan requires revising.

The Phase I environmental assessment on the former Center Chevrolet property in Exmore, Virginia is complete. A sampling program is proposed to further evaluate whether soil and groundwater contamination exists, and if so, whether it presents potential health risks to construction workers and future users of the park. The property redevelopment plans include a Boys and Girls Club and a town park, which is part of the town's Main Street revitalization.

Finally, cleanup was completed at the KMC Plant located just outside of Cheriton, Virginia, and redevelopment activities are underway. The property used Targeted Brownfields Assessment (TBA) funding to conduct an initial assessment, with the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) assisting with additional assessment and cleanup. The property has had commercial use in the past, but the town is considering new sustainable uses, which could include incorporating an innovative solution such as the construction of a biofuels plant, an agricultural plastic recycling location, or a waste-to-energy facility.

SHOWCASE COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES AND PLANNED ACTIVITIES

The Brownfields Showcase Community designation has provided outreach, advice, and assessment in support of multiple revitalization efforts throughout the Northampton County community, as well as a liaison to regulators and funding sources. Projects in the Cape Charles/Northampton County Pilot meet multiple environmental objectives while continuing to bring blighted properties back to safe and productive use. Several kinds of energy efficiency and renewable energy projects are under development at multiple brownfields in the county.

The Sustainable Technology Park at Cape Charles is currently for sale. With a projected leveraging of 1,500 jobs, this former brownfield is an example of a successful economic and environmental restoration effort. In addition, the work on the other three projects in Cape Charles/Northampton County continues to bring blighted properties back to safe and productive use.

Contacts

Showcase Community Coordinator
757-678-0413

U.S. EPA - Region 3
(215) 814-3132